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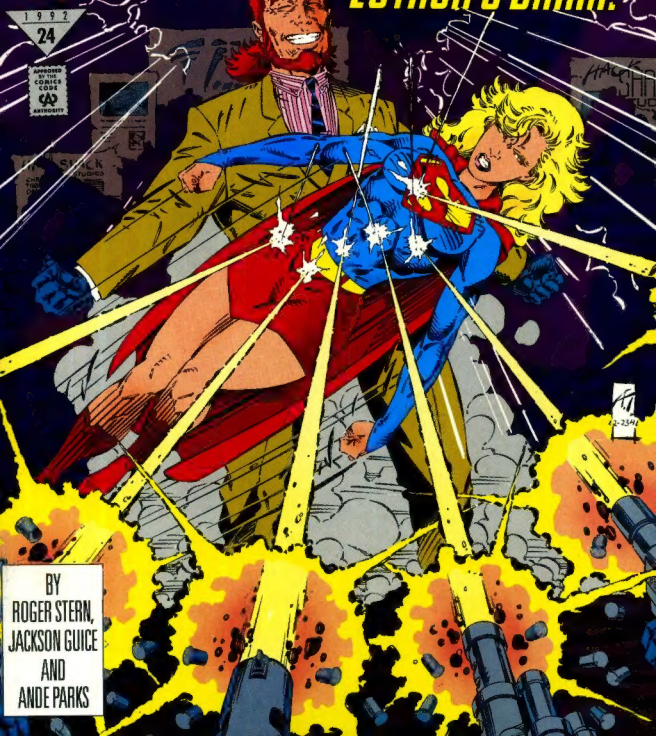
1992

24

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SUPERMAN ACTION COMICS

*THEY SAVED
LUTHOR'S BRAIN!*



12-2341

BY
ROGER STERN,
JACKSON GUICE
AND
ANDE PARKS

W-L-E-X-F-M NEWS,
LYLE RICHARDS REPORTING...
METROPOLIS POLICE ARE
CHARGING THE ROBOTIC
TERRORIST METALLO IN
AN AFTERNOON ATTACK
ON A MIDTOWN
THEATER--

-- WHICH HAS LEFT
AT LEAST ONE MAN
HOSPITALIZED AND
RESULTED IN WELL
OVER A MILLION
DOLLARS IN PROPERTY
DAMAGE.

METALLO, WHO'D
ESCAPED FROM
FEDERAL CUSTODY
JUST DAYS AGO,
ALLEGEDLY RAN-
SACKED THE TENTH
STREET GLEN
MORGAN SQUARE
THEATER IN A RE-
BUILT METAL
BODY--

-- CONSIDERABLY
LARGER THAN THE
ONE WHICH WAS IMPLI-
CATED IN THE DE-
STRUCTION OF THE
COMMERCE BANK
NEARLY TWO
YEARS AGO.

OKAY,
FOLKS, LET'S
KEEP IT
MOVING.

DESPITE THE
DIFFERENCE IN
SIZE, AUTHORITIES
BELIEVE HIM TO
BE THE SAME... AH
...INDIVIDUAL.

METALLO WAS
APPREHENDED BY
SUPERMAN WITH
THE AID OF THE CITY'S
SPECIAL CRIMES
UNIT, WHICH
CURRENTLY HAS
HIM IN CUSTODY...

WE CAUGHT
A BIGGIE!
THIS TIME,
MAGGIE!

SO
I SEE.

AND JUST
WHAT DO YOU
PROPOSE WE
DO WITH HIM,
TURPIN?

TALKING HEADS!

ROGER STERN / JACKSON & PARKS / BILL OAKLEY / GLENN WHITMORE / DAN THORSLAND / MIKE CARLIN
WRITER / ARTISTS / LETTERER / COLORIST / ASSISTANT EDITOR / EDITOR DOWN UNDER
~ SUPERMAN CREATED BY JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER ~

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WELL, I FIGURE WE CAN TRUCK HIM INTO THE OLD 5TH PRECINCT MOTOR POOL TO DISCONNECT HIS ARMS AN' LEGS. AN' THEN WE CAN--!

DAN, LOOK OUT! HE'S COMING BACK TO LIFE!

COMING BACK? AW, DID YOU THINK I HAD GONE OFF LINE? GOOD, THAT WAS THE IDEA!

PING

PEEYOW

PTANG

BDAM DAM-DAM DAM!

UH-OH! I WAS AFRAID OF SOMETHING LIKE THIS!

THAT POUNDING SUPER-MAN GAVE ME! DIDN'T DO MUCH MORE THAN RATTLE MY MOTOR FEEDS... I NEEDED JUST A LITTLE BREATHER... TO GIVE MY CIRCUITS A CHANCE TO RE-ALIGN THEMSELVES!

AND YOU MORONS GAVE IT TO ME! HAH-HA-HA!

YOU DIDN'T REALLY THINK THIS GLOP AND THESE CHAINS WOULD HOLD ME, DID YOU?

HANDS OFF THE
POLICE, METALLO.

I THOUGHT
THAT I WAS THE
ONE YOU WERE
MOST INTERESTED
IN FIGHTING!

SUPERMAN?
BACK FOR MORE?

YOU
NEVER
LEARN,
DO YOU?

ON THE
CONTRARY, I
LEARN QUITE
QUICKLY! AND
AS I RECALL--

--ONE OF MY EARLIER
PUNCHES LOOSENED YOUR
ARM. LET'S SEE WHAT
AN EXTRA LITTLE TWIST
WILL DO!

OH... MY
GOD...

ARE
YOU ALL
RIGHT,
DAN?

BLASTED
CHAIN LINK
JUST TORE
MY FAVORITE
JACKET.
THAT'S ALL.

OH, NICE WORK,
SUPERMAN.

WHAT'RE YOU--
GEE/CK!--NO!

OH, I
DON'T KNOW
ABOUT THAT.

HUH? YEAH...
SURE... I'M IN
THE PINK.

TOO BAD
ABOUT METALLO.
THOUGH, GUESS
WE WON'T BE
GETTIN' A
CHANCE TO
INTERROGATE
'IM NOW.

"SO, JUST WHAT
MAKES YOU THINK..."



...THAT THERE'S A PLACE FOR YOU AT THE DAILY PLANET, MR. TROUPE?

UH... WELL, MR. WHITE, I GRADUATED AT THE TOP OF MY CLASS AT HOWARD UNIVERSITY... B. A. IN JOURNALISM. I INTERNEED FOR THREE YEARS AT THE WASHINGTON POST...

...AND I'VE RECENTLY WORKED AS AN EDITORIAL ASSISTANT AT NEWSTIME. I WAS GIVEN TO UNDERSTAND THERE MIGHT BE SOME OPENINGS--?

YOU UNDERSTAND CORRECTLY. WE'RE CONSOLIDATING OUR NATIONAL AND D.C. NEWS BUREAUS, MOVING SOME PEOPLE AROUND...

...AND I MADE MANAGEMENT PROMISE TO USE THE MONEY THEY'RE SAVING TO HIRE A FEW NEW PEOPLE FOR THE CITY BEAT.

YOU SEE, RON? I TOLD YOU! AND WITH YOUR QUALIFICATIONS, YOU'RE THE PERFECT CANDIDATE! RIGHT, CHIEF?



GEE, I ONLY MEANT--!

WHY, EXCUSE ME, MISTER OLSEN! I WASN'T AWARE THAT YOU HAD BEEN PUT IN CHARGE!

DO YOU HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO HIRE AND FIRE?

NO, SIR... YOU DO!

HOW NICE OF YOU TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT. NOW GET OUT!!



SLAM!

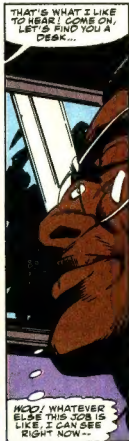
AND AS FOR YOU--!

ULP... YES, SIR?



WELCOME TO THE PLANET, RON. HOW SOON CAN YOU START?

UH... R-RIGHT AWAY, SIR.



THAT'S WHAT I LIKE TO HEAR! COME ON, LET'S HAND YOU A DESK...

WOO! WHATEVER ELSE THIS JOB IS LIKE, I CAN SEE RIGHT NOW--

"--REPORTING FOR THE PLANET WILL NEVER BE DULL!"

MR. LUTHOR--!

MR. LUTHOR,
IS IT TRUE THAT YOU
OWN PART INTEREST IN
THIS RESTAURANT?

HERE NOW, HAVE YOU GENTS
EVER KNOWN A LUTHOR TO OWN
JUST PART OF ANYTHING?
BUT TO ANSWER YOUR
QUESTION--

--NO, I DON'T
OWN IT! STILL, WITH
AS MUCH MONEY AS
I'LL BE SPENDING
HERE, PERHAPS
I SHOULD!

Down Under

HAH-HA!

I THOUGHT
THERE WAS NO
SUCH THING AS
"AUSTRALIAN
CUISINE."

THAT'S A
VICIOUS RUMOR...
SPREAD MAINLY BY
AUSTRALIANS!

WHO'S
THE LADY,
MR. L?

THIS CHARMING LASS IS MS. NAKA-
MURA, A RECENT ADDITION TO MY
STAFF. SHE'S THE ONE WHO BROUGHT
DOWN UNDER TO MY ATTENTION!

DOES THIS
MEAN THAT YOU
AND SUPERGIRL
HAVE SPLIT?

NOT
AT ALL! WHAT
KIND OF BLOODY
QUESTION IS THAT?!

CAN'T A MAN SHARE A
MEAL WITH AN EMPLOYEE
WITHOUT YOU BLEEDIN'
JOURNALS MAKING
SOMETHING OF IT?

MR.
LUTHOR--!

Down Under

OVER HERE,
MR. LUTHOR!

LUTHOR!!

WHAT IN
THE--?!

LOOK
OUT, HE'S
GOT A
GUN!

BRAT AT AT!

LEX--

--GET
BACK!!

HOLEE--!
DID YOU SEE
THAT--?!

NAKAMURA... IS
SUPERGIRL?!



GEYARGH!

OMIGOD,
HE CAUGHT A
RICOCHET!

DID
YOU SEE
THAT?

I WISH
I HADN'T!



TEAM-LUTHOR
REPORTING!
SUPERGIRL!
WE GOT THE
SIGNAL--!

IT'S ABOUT
TIME YOU
SHOWED UP!

SEE TO THAT
MANIAC!



LEX, ARE
YOU ALL
RIGHT?

YES, I--!

MR. LUTHOR!

YOUR
REACTION?

WHAT WENT
THROUGH YOUR
MIND--?

GET ME
OUT OF HERE!
NOW!



WE MUST WORK OUT A BETTER
SECURITY PLAN... THERE ARE
JUST TOO MANY NUT CASES
IN THE WORLD!

THANK GOD I
WAS THERE! IF
ANYTHING SHOULD
HAPPEN TO
YOU--!

LEX? I'M NOT
GOING TOO
FAST FOR YOU,
AM I?

NO... NO, I
WAS JUST
WONDERING
ABOUT THE
ASSASSIN.



IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
BUT I CAUGHT A BRIEF
GLIMPSE OF HIS FACE...



"... AND I COULD
HAVE SWORN THAT
HE WAS DABNEY
DONOVAN!"

YOU WON'T STOP ME,
LUTHOR. I'LL GET
YOU YETTTT;

"LUNGH? WHA'S
GOING ON..."



... 'ROUND
... HERE?

I FEEL LIKE--
OH, NO! NO!

WHERE'S THE
REST OF ME?!
WHERE--?!

WHAT KIND
OF BULL
IS THAT?!

TAKE IT
EASY, METALLO.
WE WOULD'VE
EVENTUALLY HAD
TO DISCONNECT
YOU FROM THAT
BIG METAL
HULK, ANYWAY--
JUST TO SAVE
YOU FROM AN
ENDLESS
COMA.

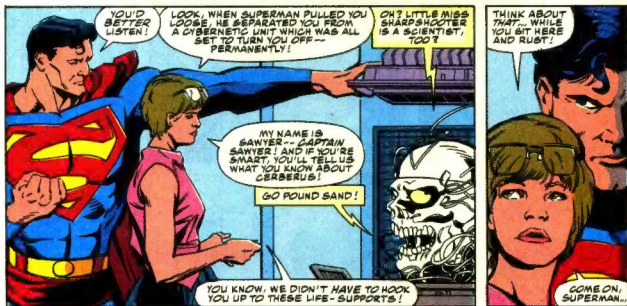
IT'S NO
"BULL"
CHROME-
DOME!

WHEN YOU
WERE SPARRIN' WITH
THE S-MAN EARLIER,
YOU SAID THE SECRET
WORD-- CERBERUS!

CERBERUS IS
THE ONE WHO BROKE
YOU OUT-- THE ONE
WHO GAVE YOU THAT
BIG, SHINY NEW
CHASSIS-- WASN'T
HE?

WELL, CERBERUS
IS ALSO THE ONE WHO'D
HAVE TURNED YOU INTO
A DEAF-- AND-- DUMB
BRAIN-IN-A-CAN--
IF NOT FOR US!

I DON'T HAVE
TO LISTEN TO THIS!



YOU'D
BETTER
LISTEN!

LOOK, WHEN SUPERMAN PULLED YOU
LOOSE, HE SEPARATED YOU FROM
A CYBERNETIC UNIT WHICH WAS ALL
SET TO TURN YOU OFF--
PERMANENTLY!

OH? LITTLE MISS
SHARPSHOOTER
IS A SCIENTIST,
TOO?

THINK ABOUT
THAT-- WHILE
YOU SIT HERE
AND RUST!

MY NAME IS
SANYER-- CAPTAIN
SANYER! AND IF YOU'RE
SMART, YOU'LL TELL US
WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT
CERBERUS!

GO POUND SAND!

YOU KNOW, WE DIDN'T HAVE TO HOOK
YOU UP TO THESE LIFE-SUPPORTS!

COME ON,
SUPERMAN...

"... I NEED A CUP OF COFFEE."

ALL "A'S" HUH?
THAT'S GREAT,
KIDDO! I KNEW
YOU COULD
DO IT!

GEEZ...
SUPERMAN
DRINKS
COFFEE...
JUST LIKE A
REG'LAR JOE.

YA
THINK
HE'LL
TALK?

I HOPE SO... EVERYONE
ELSE CONNECTED WITH
CERBERUS WHOM WE'VE
CAPTURED HAS GONE
CATATONIC ON US!

LIKE IT OR NOT,
METALLO
REPRESENTS
OUR BEST CHANCE
OF LEARNING WHO...
OR WHAT...
CERBERUS IS.

AND AFTER
ALL THE MAYHEM
CERBERUS HAS
CAUSED, I
WOULD DEARLY
LOVE TO FIND
THAT OUT!

WELL, HOWEVER
THIS TURNS OUT, WE
OWE YOU ANOTHER ONE,
SUPERMAN! WE
WOULDN'T HAVE METALLO
TO QUESTION, IF NOT
FOR YOUR QUICK
WORK!

INSPECTOR
TURPIN DESERVES
EQUAL CREDIT, MAGGIE.
THE STUFF HE SPRAYED
ON METALLO** JAMMED
ANY DEACTIVATION SIGNAL
CERBERUS MIGHT
HAVE TRANSMITTED.

JUST DOIN'
MY JOB.

* IN MAN OF
STEEL #1,
2 AND 6.

** ADVENTURES
491.

S.T.A.R. LABS
REALLY CAME
THROUGH, TOO!
I KNEW FROM
PAST EXPERI-
ENCE THAT
SYSTEMS IN
METALLO'S
METAL SKULL
WOULD KEEP
HIS BRAIN
ALIVE--

-- BUT WITHOUT THAT
EXTERNAL LIFE-SUPPORT
UNIT THEY RIGGED UP, HE
WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN IN
ANY CONDITION TO
QUESTION.

UH-HUH... NOW
IF WE CAN JUST GET
HIM TO ANSWER!
WHAT A LONG, WEIRD
DAY IT'S BEEN!

YEAH, AND NOT JUST
FOR US! I HEARD SOME
GOOS WITH A GUN TRIED
TO BLOW AWAY THE
LUTHOR KID!

THAT
"SUPERSAL" OF HIS
STOPPED THE BULLETS,
THOUGH... AN' PUT THE
GUNMAN IN THE
HOSPITAL.

SUPergirl DID THAT?!

SOUNDS LIKE
ONE HANDY
SISTER! SHE
A RELATIVE OF
YOURS?

NO... JUST AN
ACQUAINTANCE.

IS THERE ANY REPORT
ON WHAT THE GUNMAN'S
MOTIVE WAS?

NOT YET. NOT THAT HE
NECESSARILY HAD ONE...

"...AFTER ALL, THERE ARE A WHOLE LOTTA 'CRABIES' OUT THERE!"



WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE OFFICES OF JUDGE
RONALD KRAMER...

I'VE UPDATED YOUR
CALENDAR AND FINISHED
THE FILING, JUDGE. WILL
THERE BE ANYTHING
ELSE?

AH... YES, LANA!
WOULD YOU BE SO KIND
AS TO DROP THESE FILES
OFF AT JUDGE FAUST'S
OFFICE ON YOUR
WAY OUT?

THANK YOU...
OH, AND HAVE A GOOD
EVENING!

GOING
UP?

SURE THING, MS.
LANG! HOP ABOARD...
PLENTY OF ROOM!

THIS WON'T TAKE LONG.
THEN, IF TRAFFIC'S
NOT TOO HEAVY, I
SHOULD STILL BE ABLE
TO GET OVER TO
CAPITOL HILL --

--AND
SURPRISE
PETE
BEFORE--!

HEY, WE'RE
GOING
DOWN!

I THOUGHT
YOU SAID
THAT THIS
CAR WAS
GOING
UP!

SORRY, MS. LANG!
CHANGE OF PLANS!

WUMPH!

SWEET
DREAMS!

MY COUNTRY!
IT'S OF THEE,
SWEET LAND OF
LIBERTY, OF THEE
I SING!

LAND WHERE MY
FATHERS DIED...
LAND OF THE
PILGRIM'S PRIDE!

FROM E-E-E-V'RY
MOUNTAIN SIDE, ♪
LE-ET FREE-DO-M
RING! ♪

"EVERYTHING'S PRO-
CEEDING WELL..."

... HIS PULSE IS STEADY.
WE'VE TAKEN HIM OFF THE
I-V. HE SHOULD BE
COMING AROUND--

--SOON

LET ME
GO! WHO
ARE YOU?
WHERE--?

TAKE IT EASY, DONOVAN.
YOU'RE STILL IN THE
HOSPITAL.

YOU...
KNOW WHO I
AM?

WE KNOW THAT
YOUR FINGERPRINTS
MATCH THOSE OF
A DR. DABNEY
DONOVAN. OF
COURSE, HE'S
SUPPOSED TO BE
DEAD!

HE WAS
ALSO SUPPOSED
TO BE SOME SORT
OF GENETICIST...
NOT AN
ASSASSIN. WOULD
YOU CARE TO
ENLIGHTEN US
ABOUT ANY OF
THAT?

YOU HAVE
ME AT A DIS-
ADVANTAGE. I
CAN BARELY
MAKE OUT LIGHT
AND DARK
THROUGH THIS
GAUZE. WHO
ARE YOU
PEOPLE?

INSPECTOR WILLIAM
HENDERSON, METROP-
OLIS POLICE DEPART-
MENT. THE MAN WITH
ME IS DR. BOL
HUDSON.

HE WAS
UNDER
SEDATION
THEN,
INSPECTOR
RAYING--!

I WAS NOT
RAYING! I
NEVER
RAYE!!

YES, YES... I KNOW
ALL ABOUT MY
"MIRANDA RIGHTS!"

ALL RIGHT,
INSPECTOR. I
AM DABNEY
DONOVAN

"IT ALL BEGAN MONTHS AGO, WHEN
THE ELDER LUTHOR'S CORPORATE
EMPIRE WAS TAKEN OVER BY THAT
BRAINIAC FELLOW! I DON'T KNOW
ALL THE PARTICULARS OF
THE INCIDENT..."

OH, I
UNDERSTAND
THAT YOU TOLD A
NURSE SOME-
THING ABOUT PRE-
SERVING LEX
LUTHOR'S BRAIN?
I PRESUME THAT
YOU MEANT
THE OLDER
LUTHOR--

--SINCE
SUPERGIRL
PREVENTED YOU
FROM SHOOTING
UP THE YOUNGER
ONE.

CALM DOWN,
DONOVAN! I'M
WILLING TO GIVE
YOU THE BENEFIT
OF THE DOUBT. I
HAVE TO WARN
YOU, THOUGH, THAT
ANYTHING YOU
SAY--!

OBVIOUSLY, MY
REPORTED DEATH
WAS A RUSE... BUT
THAT'S OF LITTLE
IMPORTANCE. WHAT
IS IMPORTANT IS
THAT YOU UNDER-
STAND MY INVOLVE-
MENT WITH BOTH
LEX LUTHORS!

"... BUT I DO KNOW THAT, WHEN
IT WAS ALL OVER, LUTHOR
WAS LEFT IN POSSESSION OF A
HIGHLY SOPHISTICATED GEN-
ETICS LABORATORY. UNFOR-
TUNATELY, HE HAD NO ONE WHO
WAS IN ANY SHAPE TO RUN IT.

IN ACTION
#649.

"SO HE CONTACTED A FORMER EMPLOYEE-- A DR. TENG-- AND ARRANGED A TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENT FOR HIM AT A GOVERNMENT GENETICS FACILITY... THE CAPMUS PROJECT."

"THE IDEA WAS FOR TENG TO SCOUT OUT TALENT WHO WOULD BE OF A MIND TO WORK FOR LUTHOR."

"WHAT HE FOUND IN THE CATACOMBS BENEATH THE PROJECT WAS MY OWN PRIVATE LAB. I HAD HELPED FOUND THE PROJECT, YOU SEE..."

"... BUT AFTER A FALLING-OUT WITH THE GUISLINGS WHO HAD TAKEN CHARGE... WELL, I MIGHT AS WELL ADMIT IT... I'D FAKED MY DEATH..."

"--AND MOVED FARTHER UNDERGROUND TO CONTINUE MY EXPERIMENTS IN THE MANNER I SAW FIT."

"I WAS, THEREFORE, LESS THAN PLEASED UPON FIRST ENCOUNTERING DR. TENG."

"TENG WAS MOST PERSUASIVE, HOWEVER. AFTER A BIT OF BARGAINING, HE CONVINCED ME TO JOIN HIM IN... LUTHOR'S NEW LAB..."

"... FOR CONSIDERABLE COMPENSATION, MIND YOU."

"EVEN I WAS IMPRESSED BY THE EQUIPMENT WHICH LUTHOR HAD ACQUIRED..."

"TENG AND I HAD ALREADY MADE SIGNIFICANT BREAKTHROUGHS, BUT OUR PATRON WAS NOT SATISFIED..."

"I'D HOPED THAT YOU MIGHT GROW ME A NEW RIGHT HAND... A REAL HAND TO REPLACE THIS PROSTHETIC."

"BUT IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT NOW. THE RADIATION POISONING THAT TOOK MY HAND HAS SPREAD."

"...AND SO I INFORMED HIM, WHEN WE FINALLY MET."

"I NEED A CURE... AND I NEED IT FAST!"

"LEX LUTHOR WAS AN UNHAPPY MAN. HE HAD LESS THAN A YEAR TO LIVE, AND HE KNEW THAT HIS STRENGTH, HIS VITALITY WOULD SOON FADE."

"WE TOLD HIM THAT RADICAL MEASURES WERE NECESSARY... THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO PLACE HIMSELF TOTALLY IN OUR CARE FOR US TO HELP HIM."

"BUT THAT, HE COULD NOT DO."

"THERE WAS NO ONE TO WHOM HE COULD ENTRUST HIS VAST EMPIRE, AND SO, HE RETURNED TO METROPOLIS..."

"... TO THE STOPSAP MEASURES OF CHEMOTHERAPY AND VITAMIN INJECTIONS."

"I DON'T KNOW WHAT WENT THROUGH HIS MIND IN THE INTERVENING WEEKS, BUT I IMAGINE THAT THE THOUGHT OF LOSING CONTROL, OF SEEING HIS LEXCORP START TO FALTER, MUST HAVE GALLED HIM."

"LEXCORP NEARLY FALTERED ANYWAY -- AND NO DOUBT WOULD HAVE FALLEN APART, HAD HE NOT HIT UPON THE PLAN."

"AND ONCE LEX LUTHOR HAD HIS PLAN, THINGS HAPPENED VERY QUICKLY."

"IT TOOK HIM ONLY THREE DAYS TO ARRANGE THE CLEARANCE FOR AN AROUND-THE-WORLD SPEED TRIAL OF HIS NEWEST LEXWING JET. RUMORS OF HIS ILLNESS WERE CIRCULATING BY THAT POINT--"

"LUTHOR CERTAINLY GAVE THEM SOMETHING TO REMEMBER..."

"-- AND MANY MEMBERS OF LUTHOR'S OWN STAFF BELIEVED THAT THE FLIGHT WAS INTENDED TO BE HIS LAST HURRAH."

"... ESPECIALLY THE CO-PILOT WHOM HE EJECTED OVER THE CARIBBEAN. WHAT WAS HIS NAME... BURTON?"

YES, YES... AND LUTHOR WENT ON TO CRASH IN THE ANDES. EVERYONE KNOWS ABOUT THAT!

IT WAS ALL OVER THE NEWS... HOW SUPERMAN RECOVERED THE BODY... OR WHAT WAS LEFT OF IT.

A BODY WAS RECOVERED, BUT NOT LUTHOR'S.

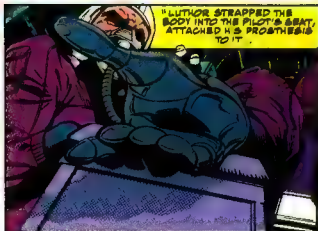
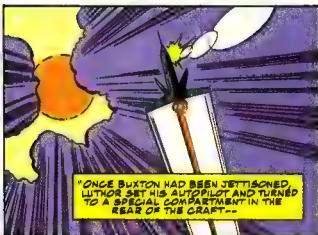
COME ON, DONOVAN... ARMY FORENSICS MADE A POSITIVE I.D. BASED ON A DNA CHECK!

THE HEAD OF OUR SPECIAL CRIMES UNIT PERSONALLY SEIZED LUTHOR'S MEDICAL RECORDS FROM GRETCHEN KELLEY, HIS PERSONAL PHYSICIAN--!

LORD, HOW GULLIBLE CAN YOU PEOPLE BE? THOSE RECORDS WERE ALTERED BEFORE LUTHOR EVER TOOK OFF! HIS DOCTOR NEVER EVEN KNEW!

ALL RIGHT, THEN WHOSE BODY WAS IT? HOW DID IT GET TO THE CRASH SITE? AND WHAT HAPPENED TO LUTHOR?!

I DON'T KNOW WHOSE BODY... SOME NAMELESS DERELICT WHO WAS LUTHOR'S SIZE AND AGE.



"SO, WHILE THE JET FLEW ON TO ITS PROGRAMMED CRASH SITE IN PERU, LUTHOR WAS PLUCKED FROM THE PACIFIC OCEAN-- SOMEWHERE OFF THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS-- BY HIS HENCHMAN, HAPPERSEN."

"BY THAT YOU MEAN DOCTOR SYDNEY HAPPERSEN THE CYBERNETICS EXPERT?"

"THE VERY ONE, INSPECTOR. I DON'T KNOW WHAT DIRT LUTHOR HAS ON HIM, BUT HE WAS DEEPLY INVOLVED IN THE ENTIRE CHARADE."

"WHERE WAS I? OH, YES... HAPPERSEN RETRIEVED LUTHOR AND PERSONALLY SPURTED HIM AWAY..."

"...TO A SECRET FACILITY BUILT LONG AGO IN THE AUSTRALIAN OUTBACK. WE HAD ALREADY MOVED OUR LABORATORY THERE, AS PER HIS PLAN..."

"WELL, TENG--?"

AS WE FEARED, THE NEW TESTS SHOW THAT IT IS RAPIDLY SPREADING THROUGH YOUR LYMPHATIC SYSTEM, MR. LUTHOR. WE CANNOT DELAY MUCH LONGER.

VERY WELL...
...LET'S DO IT.

"I ADMINISTERED THE ANESTHESIA MYSELF..."

"OF NECESSITY, WE KEPT LUTHOR UNCONSCIOUS FOR DAYS."

"...LUTHOR? CAN YOU HEAR US?"

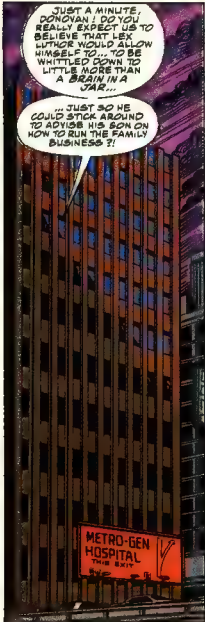
IT'S ELECTRONIC. WE HAD TO LOSE THE LARYNX.

"...AND THEN TENG AND I WENT ABOUT OUR BLOODY BUSINESS."

"THE AWAKENING WAS QUITE DIS-ORIENTING FOR HIM, EVEN THOUGH HE'D BEEN WARNED WHAT TO EXPECT..."

"Y-YES... I... WHAT'S WRONG WITH MY VOICE?"

DAMN.



JUST A MINUTE, DONOVAN! DO YOU REALLY EXPECT US TO BELIEVE THAT LEX LUTHOR WOULD ALLOW HIMSELF TO... TO BE WHITTLED DOWN TO LITTLE MORE THAN A BRAIN IN A JAR...

... JUST SO HE COULD STICK AROUND TO ADVISE HIS SON ON HOW TO RUN THE FAMILY BUSINESS?!

NOT AT ALL, INSPECTOR. THAT WOULD BE ABSURD

NO, THE PLAN WAS TO SAVE LUTHOR'S BRAIN, SO THAT HE MIGHT BECOME HIS OWN SON!

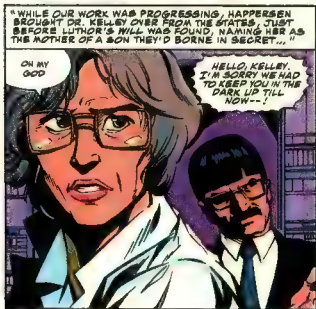
"WITH SOME ASSISTANCE FROM TENG, I HAD DE- VISED A MEANS OF QUICKLY GROWING A NEW BODY AROUND HIS BRAIN!"

AS YOU REQUESTED, WE'VE PLAYED A BIT WITH THE DNA YOU'LL BE TALLER, STRONGER...



AND THE HAIR? WHAT ABOUT THE HAIR?

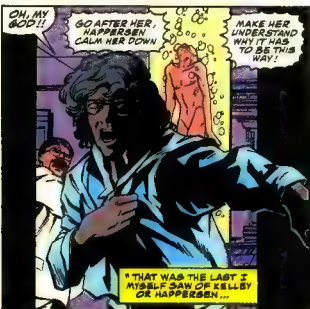
MUCH THICKER, SIR... NOT TO WORRY



"WHILE OUR WORK WAS PROGRESSING, HAPPERSEN BROUGHT DR. KELLEY OVER FROM THE STATES... JUST BEFORE LUTHOR'S WILL WAS FOUND, NAMING HER AS THE MOTHER OF A SON THEY'D BORN IN SECRET..."

OH MY GOD

HELLO, KELLEY. I'M SORRY WE HAD TO KEEP YOU IN THE DARK UP TILL NOW--!



OH, MY GOD!!

GO AFTER HER, HAPPERSEN. CALM HER DOWN

MAKE HER UNDERSTAND WHY IT HAS TO BE THIS WAY!

"THAT WAS THE LAST I MYSELF SAW OF KELLEY OR HAPPERSEN..."

"... BUT I KNOW THAT HE CONVINCED HER TO GO ALONG WITH THE PLAN. I UNDERSTAND THAT SHE AND LUTHOR WERE ONCE LOVERS... PERHAPS SHE LOVED HIM STILL.

"IN THE MEANTIME, OUR WORK HAD REACHED FRUITION..."

PULSE...
RESPIRATION...
REFLEXES...
EVERYTHING IS GREEN!

AND NOW
DO YOU FEEL,
MR. LUTHOR?

I FEEL...
GOOD,
STRONG!

BETTER THAN
I'VE EVER FELT
BEFORE -- AN'
THAT'S FAIR
DINKUM!

*WEEKS OF SLEEP-TEACHING TAPES
HAD GIVEN HIM THE APPROPRIATE
AUSTRALIAN ACCENT--

"-- BUT IT WAS MY GENIUS
WHICH GAVE HIM THE
BODY OF A STRAPPING
YOUNG MAN!"

YES!

"I FELT A NATURAL PRIDE,
WATCHING HIM RIDE OFF TO
RECLAIM HIS EMPIRE. THE
WORLD WOULD THINK HIM
KELLEY'S AND LUTHOR'S
SON... BUT I CONSID-
ERED HIM MINE!"

KRA
BOOM

"... A DOZEN EXPLOSIVE
CHARGES LEVELED THE
INSTALLATION.

"THE FRUIT OF MY
LABORS HAD
BECOME A
FRANKENSTEIN'S
MONSTER!"

*BUT, ONCE
HE WAS
SAFELY OUT
OF RANGE...

"TENG WAS KILLED INSTANTLY. I WAS LUCKIER..."

"... A FALLING BEAM HAD SHIELDED ME FROM THE WORST OF IT. LUTHOR NEVER EVEN BOTHERED TO CHECK HIS HANDWORK... PERHAPS HIS REGAINED YOUTH MADE HIM OVER-CONFIDENT

"IT TOOK MONTHS FOR ME TO RECOVER AND MAKE MY WAY BACK TO THE STATES. BUT I SWORE THAT I WOULD HAVE MY REVENGE!"

WHAT YOUR STORY IMPLIES ABOUT LUTHOR'S WILL, LEXCORP'S BUSINESS REVERSALS--!

LUTHOR PLANTED THE WILL WHERE IT WOULD BE FOUND AFTER HIS "DEATH," AND HE FULLY EXPECTED LEXCORP TO FLOUNDER IN HIS ABSENCE...

... ALL THE BETTER FOR THE ARRIVAL OF HIS "SON" TO SECURE HIS STATUS AS SAVIOR OF METROPOLIS.

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT ANYONE COULD ENGINEER SUCH A TWISTED SCHEME.

LEX LUTHOR COULD--AND DID! HE IS A MASTER OF SKULDUGGERY... A GENIUS IN SUCH MATTERS.

REALLY? WELL...

CLICK!

...NICE OF YOU TO SAY SO!

YOUR VOICE! YOU'RE--!

YOUR VERY OWN WORK OF ART, DABNEY! I CAN'T TAKE CREDIT FOR THE VOCAL IMPERSONATION, THOUGH--THAT WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY A DEVICE OF HAPPERSEN'S!

ISN'T THAT RIGHT, SYDNEY?

CLICK! YES, MR. LUTHOR.

W-WHAT DO YOU INTEND TO DO?

I SHOULDN'T HAVE TO SPELL IT OUT FOR YOU. YOU'RE RIGHT. I WAS OVER-CONFIDENT...

...MY MISTAKE. YOU'RE NOW A SERIOUS LIABILITY TO ME, MATE.

AND A GOOD BUSINESS-MAN ALWAYS CANCELS OUT HIS LIABILITIES.



"... THIS ONE CALLED HIMSELF RORC



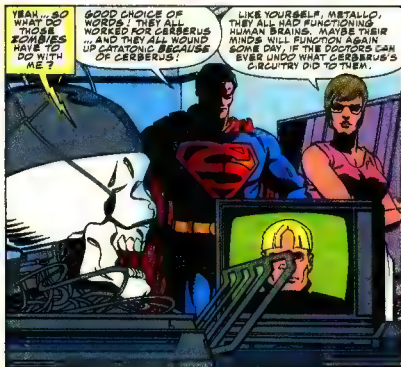
"THIS IS HORACE BELCHER..."



"... JOE..."



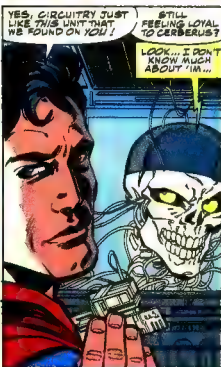
"... AND BLOCKHOUSE."



YEAH... SO WHAT DO THOSE ZOMBIES HAVE TO DO WITH ME?

GOOD CHOICE OF WORDS! THEY ALL WORKED FOR CERBERUS... AND THEY ALL WOUND UP CATATONIC BECAUSE OF CERBERUS!

LIKE YOURSELF, METALLO, THEY ALL HAD FUNCTIONING HUMAN BRAINS. MAYBE THEIR MINDS WILL FUNCTION AGAIN SOME DAY, IF THE DOCTORS CAN EVER UNDO WHAT CERBERUS'S CIRCUITRY DID TO THEM.



YES, CIRCUITRY JUST LIKE THIS UNIT THAT WE FOUND ON YOU!

STILL FEELING LOYAL TO CERBERUS?

LOOK... I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT 'IM...



"... BUT I CAN TELL YOU WHERE TO FIND 'IM!

"GOOD ENOUGH?"

GOOD ENOUGH.

FROM METROPOLIS... ACROSS THE NATION... AND AROUND THE WORLD...

THIS IS NEWS-CENTER 7... WITH JORGE LOPEZ!

GOOD EVENING. LOCAL AUTHORITIES ARE STILL TRYING TO DETERMINE THE CAUSE OF A FIRE AT METROPOLIS GENERAL HOSPITAL--



--WHICH CLAIMED THE LIFE OF A MAN WHO'D ALLEGEDLY TRIED TO KILL LEXCORP EXECUTIVE LEX LUTHOR THE SECOND IN A MIDDAY SHOOT-OUT.



LUTHOR ESCAPED HARM THROUGH THE INTERVENTION OF SUPERGIRL!



AND, IN YET ANOTHER BIZARRE TWIST, A SOURCE HAS TOLD NEWS-CENTER 7 THAT FINGERPRINTS TAKEN FROM THE WOULD-BE ASSASSIN--

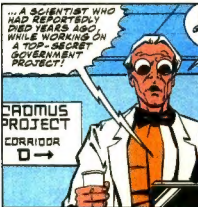


--WERE IDENTIFIED AS THOSE OF ONE DABNEY DONOVAN...



...A SCIENTIST WHO HAD REPORTEDLY DIED YEARS AGO WHILE WORKING ON A TOP-SECRET GOVERNMENT PROJECT!

PROMUS PROJECT
CORRIDOR
D →



WHAT?! THERE MUST BE SOME MISTAKE, GUARDIAN! I EXAMINED DABNEY'S BODY MYSELF!



I'M A CLONE! WHAT DABNEY HAD CLONED HIMSELF?



"WHAT IF ONE OF HIM IS STILL ALIVE?!"

DRAT!

NUMBER THREE ALWAYS WAS HEADSTRONG!

NOW I SUPPOSE I'LL HAVE TO MOVE FURTHER UNDERGROUND!



FEDERAL AUTHORITIES HAVE SO FAR REFUSED COMMENT...

...MORE ON THAT STORY AS IT DEVELOPS.

DONOVAN'S NOT AN IMMEDIATE DANGER... HIS OWN OUTLAW STATUS INSURES THAT. BUT IF HE SHOULD EVER BE CAPTURED...

...MY SECRET WOULD BE IN JEOPARDY.



HE'S OUT THERE... SOMEWHERE... BEYOND MY REACH. BEYOND MY REACH!



DAMN.

NEXT WEEK: SUPERMAN UNCOVERS THE SECRET OF CERBERUS IN SUPERMAN: THE MAN OF STEEL #13!

THEN: OUR HERO TAKES ON THE SONS OF LIBERTY IN SUPERMAN #64 AND ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #442!

AND NEXT MONTH: SUPERMAN BATTLES TO SAVE THE NATION'S CAPITAL IN ACTION COMICS #674!

MISS THEM NOT!

RE: ACTION

DC COMICS INC.

1325 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019

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Dear Mike and Dan:

ACTION COMICS #674 was outstanding!! As great as "Blackout" and "Time and Time Again" were, I have a feeling that you are really going to outdo yourselves this time. Matrix, Draaga, Maxima, and Brainiac all in one issue!! I guess the only thing missing is Lex Luthor Sr. By the way, I wonder what Brainiac's reaction will be when he gets to Earth and only finds Lex Luthor II?

Anyway, on to other matters. I'm very happy that things are beginning to look up for Jimmy Olsen. I was starting to wonder how far you guys were going to let him fall. Now that he has his photos, maybe he can get his old spot back at the Daily Planet. Or better yet, have Jimmy take them to a rival paper and get a job there. Give us a chance to see how Lois and Clark would react to competing with Jimmy for news items. It could be very interesting.

Finally a question: What issue did the Hellgrammite first appear in? I don't remember seeing him before ACTION COMICS #673.

Kevin Hall
Sandston, VA

We can't blame you for that, Kevin, it was a looong time ago, all the way back in THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD #80!

Dear Mike and Dan:

Gosh, why aren't all comics this good?

I've been impressed with the SUPERMAN line, especially over the past couple of months. We've been treated to some surprisingly consistent and high quality stories. Superman is no longer a character readers can take for granted. THIS is where it's all happening!

ACTION COMICS #674, for example. For a buck (a fair deal for entertainment, these days), we're treated to the return of Supergirl, Draaga, Brainiac, and Maxima(!). After the stunning annual featuring her ladyship this summer, I would very much welcome her as a recurring character. There's a lot more to her than

what we've seen. In fact, she may be the perfect element to put some friction in the Clark-Lois romance. Bring on the red-hot mama!

If the prologue is any indication, "Panic in the Sky" looks to be a lot of fun and a memorable storyline. I hope more folks will take a peek. Once they've sampled SUPERMAN in '92, they'll be with you for the duration.

Mark Lucas
Los Angeles, CA

Dear Dan and all the crew:

Holy Toledo! Just after hesitating to send in a flurry of letters complaining about the SUPERMAN titles getting a little boring, you've got "Panic in the Sky" brewing. Great! Let me tell you what I liked about this issue:

"SUPERGIRL IN ACTION COMICS!"

Supergirl on the cover. I was wondering how you were going to bring her back—if she had been anything other than the former Matrix, it wouldn't have worked. It was a good shot of her, too! It was about time you dealt with her whereabouts, as well as Draaga's.

Warworld—are we to assume this thing developed as the Green Lantern Corps fell apart, or is it somehow older? If so, then how could it have avoided conflict with the GLs?

Brainiac! With Luthor gone, who can be Superman's arch-enemy? I guess there can be a rogues gallery of Superman villains, without one single archfoe, but Brainiac will come closer than any of the other guys...

What I didn't like:

I don't really care about Maxima, but I did like her appearance in the ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN ANNUAL this past year, so maybe she's got potential.

Jimmy's supposed comeback off the belated pictures just doesn't seem realistic, even in comic book time.

The Hellgrammite seems too weird.

Supergirl as an ongoing, earth-bound character just won't work. She's not at all human, and she's

not even from this universe.

By the way, if Superman is going to join the Justice League (YES!), is that title going to fall into the strict continuity we're used to?

Craig E. Canevit
Orange Park, FL

Nope, JUSTICE LEAGUE AMERICA will remain separate from the SUPERMAN titles in terms of hardcore continuity, Craig, but will still fit into the DC Universe, so there won't be any maddening continuity glitches between it and the material in these pages (particularly since Dan Jurgens will be handling the writing and art!).

Dear ACTION:

Seeing Supergirl dominate a cover was like a trip down memory lane for this old Superman fan. Outstanding work by Messrs. Jurgens, McLeod, and whoever redesigned the cover logo.

Seeing Brainiac again was terrific. Great Rao! He's running Warworld? "Panic in the Sky" already has me shaking! I can't wait to get this thing rolling next week!

This title really lived up to its name with ACTION COMICS #674. Lotsa action to go with the surprises!

The Team of McLeod and Rodier is improving greatly, though I think Bob looks best doing his own inks.

Speaking of artwork, let's see a poster or two come out of this new series-within-a-series.

Chris Khalaf
Houston, TX

Dear Dan:

Re: ACTION COMICS #674

Would you believe me when I say that this was the most attractive cover of a SUPERMAN title in years? It really was great! What do you think of making a poster out of it? Or maybe you should give Jurgens and McLeod a raise?

Either way, the "Panic in the Sky" storyline sounds quite good, as long as Lobo doesn't show up!

Before I go, who did the idea of the **SUPERGIRL** in ACTION COMICS title? It was great!

The Blue Panther, a.k.a. Kashif Schwalbach, GERMANY

The Supergirl logo was the idea of none other than the Great Carlini himself, conjured from his fertile brow with a stentorian chant of power: "Aaie-ya-yieea!" Go figure...

Dear Dan:

Well, "Panic in the Sky" is off and rolling, and if things stay as good as **SUPERGIRL** in ACTION COMICS #674, I think it's safe to say that this will be the crossover of the year. First things first, though!

There was an edge to Bob McLeod's and Denis Rodier's art this issue that was surprising. Good surprising, that is. Although it looks as if Jackson Guice is taking over for Bob on pencilling this title (hey, he's good, too), I'm really going to miss the exciting, dynamic Super-cast and crew that Bob has, for the most part, given us over the last couple of years. Thanks for your contributions, Bob—you've earned a place among the most respected Super-artists.

It was nice to see the Hellgrammite again; I was beginning to wonder if you had forgotten about him! As for the main thrust of the story (Supergirl under the control of Brainiac), it was a top-notch setup for the fireworks to come!

I seem to recall reading an interview with Mike Carlin a while ago, in which he stated that the Supergirl suit was going to be filled. It looks as if that's well on its way to occurring for good. Let's keep Supergirl around for a while (especially if she becomes Lex L's bodyguard!).

Jason Crase
Arlington Heights, IL

Dear Guys/Gal:

To say the cover of ACTION COMICS #674 was great is like saying Neil Armstrong thought it was "nice" to be the first man on the moon.

To say it was terrific to see Supergirl again is like saying that the sun is a warm place.

To say Brainiac and Warworld together is a good idea is like saying electricity has had a slight effect on modern society.

To say I'm looking forward to the rest of "Panic in the Sky" is like saying I'd be pleased to win a Baldy Award.

Paul Newton Hicks
Chatswood, AUSTRALIA

You got it! (We like understatement!)

Dear Superfriends:

Even though I'm receiving my comics a little later than I've been accustomed, and therefore my comments will reach you later than I'd like, I cannot let my ACTION COMICS #674 be filed away into my collection without commenting on the "The Past is Prologue."

The first Warworld saga remains the most totally enthralling storyline Superman has seen. The sheer scope and intensity of it were breathtaking at the time and still offer a thrill upon rereading. The opening chapter of this latest cosmic epic promises an experience at least on a par with that. In fact, with the involvement of Matrix, Brainiac and Maxima, I fully expect "Panic in the Sky" to ultimately overshadow that former standard of excellence. Roger Stern has scripted a wonderful start, putting many of the major players in place while leaving room for many twists and turns in the upcoming episodes. Of course, the highlight for this fan is undoubtedly the return of Matrix. Wait, no it isn't... it's the return of Supergirl! The same thing, you say? I know Supergirl is just one of countless forms Matrix can assume, but you don't need me to tell you that the Girl of Steel identity is the only one Superman fandom is interested in.

It also goes without saying (but I'll say it anyway) that the cover by Dan and Bob, along with the Supergirl logo, makes this the finest ACTION COMICS cover since...since...well, possibly since issue #252!

So, I have great hopes for "Panic in the Sky," and I know I am going to enjoy these next few issues of the Superman titles even more than I usually do. And you know I'll write to let you know, right? Right. So until then, remember to "Look, up in the sky..." (Compliments to Bob Rozakis.)

Dale Coe
Cheshire, ENGLAND

While it's true that Matrix can assume many forms, Dale, Supergirl is the identity she was created for, and she'll always "be" Supergirl, no matter what she may look like. All the better for us, eh?

—Dan "Matrix" Thorland
Hey, I'm Really
Not That Kind of Girl!

NEXT WEEK: Cerebral catastrophe when Superman takes on the leader of Cerberus! The Man of Steel is going to end this notorious terrorist's reign of destruction, and we aren't just whistling Dixie when we tell you that *heads will roll!* Be here for **SUPERMAN: THE MAN OF STEEL** #13, by Louise Simonson, Jon Bogdanove, and Dennis Jankel

IN TWO WEEKS: They gave him a reason to live when his country turned its back on him, they helped him root out corruption and crime across the globe. The Sons of Liberty have helped Agent Liberty be a force for good—or have they? When the Agent discovers that they've framed Pete Ross, will he turn his back on them? Don't miss the suspense in **SUPERMAN** #69, by Dan Jurgens, guest penciller Pete Krause, and guest inker Keith Williams.

IN THREE WEEKS: The Sons of Liberty have kidnapped someone near and dear to Pete Ross in order to guarantee his cooperation, but what they didn't count on is that she is also near and dear to the Man of Steel! In part two of the trial of Pete Ross, Superman rushes to the aid of his lifelong friend—and smack into Agent Liberty! You'd better duck, 'cause here comes **ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN** #492—by Jerry Ordway, and the aforementioned Pete Krause and Keith Williams.

IN ONE MONTH: In ACTION COMICS #679, the shocking aftermath of the trial of Pete Ross, and it's so explosive that the Washington D.C. Special Crimes Unit is called out to keep a cap on things! But can even they perform damage control on a situation as volatile as Shellshock? Some tough decisions will be made—and drastic action taken! Brought to us by Roger Stern, Jackson Guice, and Denis Rodier!

This issue's cover was pencilled and inked by Art Thibert, and colored by Glenn Whitmore.



